

# BUILDING HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

## Water Quality and Quantity

We are fortunate to have access to clean, safe drinking water in York Region; however, some agricultural, commercial, institutional and industrial land use activities can potentially affect water supplies.

Roadways, parking lots and rooftops increase the likelihood of stormwater runoff, which can contaminate our drinking water sources and require more complex water treatment. Contaminants may include: commercial and industrial chemicals, fertilizers and pesticides, grease and toxic chemicals from roadways and parking lots, oil, sediment from construction sites and winter salt. Runoff pollution also promotes algae growth and harms fish.

Through good land use planning, we can help protect our drinking water sources for generations to come.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

1-877-464-9675

[york.ca/HealthyBuiltEnvironment](http://york.ca/HealthyBuiltEnvironment)

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## DID YOU KNOW?

- The Regional water system supplies roughly 123 billion litres of water to residents and businesses annually, enough to fill about 50,000 Olympic-size swimming pools
- The York Water System serves approximately 94% of the Region's population. Private wells serve the remainder of the population.
- Approximately 90% of York Region's drinking water comes from Lake Ontario. The remainder is supplied by groundwater (7%) and Lake Simcoe (3%).
- Urban stormwater contributes substantially to the total phosphorus load to Lake Simcoe at approximately 31% by current estimates (Lake Simcoe Region Conservation Authority source).

The logo for York Region, featuring a stylized white bird or wing shape above the text "York Region" in a white serif font.

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## You make a difference when you...

### Conserve water:

- Reduce your water use through water-saving technologies (e.g., rain barrels, low-flow toilets and showerheads)
- Choose landscape features that require little or no watering such as native plants and rain gardens
- Instead of asphalt or pavement, try permeable pavers which allow water to seep between the stones, reducing runoff and the potential for flooding

### Protect your pipes:

Flushing items that don't belong down your toilets and drains can lead to backups in your homes, cause damage to the wastewater treatment system and it can even cause sewage to overflow into our lakes and rivers.

- Take unused or expired pharmaceuticals and sharps (such as needles) back to your local pharmacy for proper disposal. Visit [healthsteward.ca](http://healthsteward.ca) to find a pharmacy near you.
- Just because something says flushable, doesn't mean it can be flushed! Items such as single-use wipes and personal hygiene products go in the garbage. These items are not flushable and do not break down.
- Protect your pipes! Fats, oils and grease (FOG) are organic waste and should be placed in your green bin. Before washing dirty pots, pans and dishes, wait for FOG to cool and wipe or scrape into the green bin. Liquid cooking oils that don't solidify can be poured into a sealable container and dropped off at a York Region waste depot for recycling into biodiesel.

Not sure where something goes? Bindicator knows

**Dispose of waste properly:** Store paint, degreasers, solvents and other hazardous chemicals in a safe place and properly dispose of them at one of York Region's Waste Depots.

**Keep your well clean and operational:** Test your well water at least three times a year. Ensure your well is in good condition and free from sources of contamination. Learn how York Region offers free testing at [york.ca/WellWater](http://york.ca/WellWater)

Visit your city or town's website to learn more about how their Official Plan supports safe and sustainable water supply.

## Municipalities work together to protect our drinking water by...

- Coordinating water and wastewater services with land use planning approvals
- Developing and implementing stormwater management plans, in partnership with stakeholders
- Ensuring new developments have an integrated approach to water management and water conservation, such as constructed wetlands, green roofs, native vegetation cover, permeable surfaces, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, and water efficient buildings.
- Protecting the quality of drinking water by identifying and mapping municipal wells and intake protection zones
- Reducing the risk to municipal drinking water systems by implementing source protection plan policies

**BE AN ACTIVE PARTNER WHERE YOU LIVE, LEARN, WORK AND PLAY.**  
Participate in building healthy communities!